

Upcoming Events

November 2021

National Native American Heritage Month
Family Caregivers Month
Military Family Month

Veterans Day

[National Veterans Day Ceremony](#)

Arlington National Cemetery
November 11

Transgender Day of Remembrance

November 20

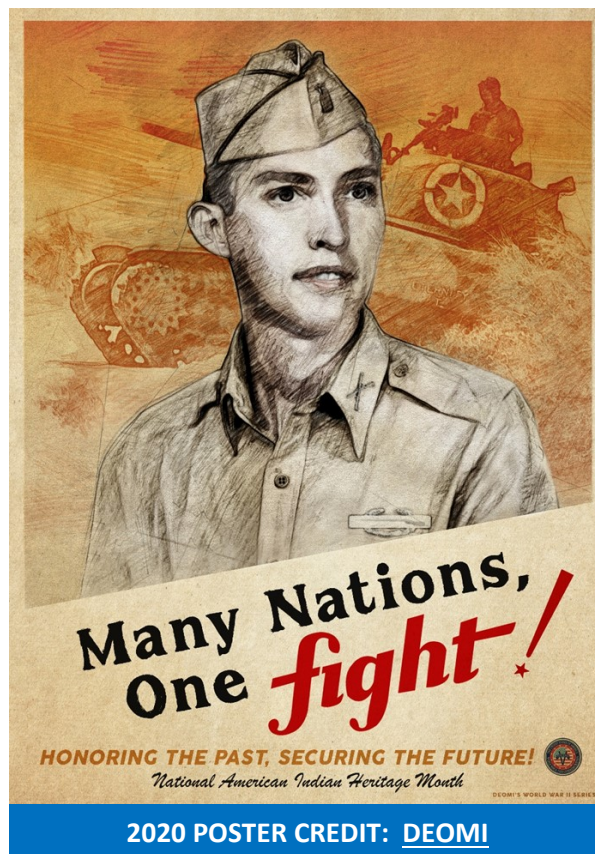
Thanksgiving

November 25

ORMDI

Steps Toward Conflict Resolution

You can contact ORMDI toll-free at 1-888-566-3982 (TTY/TDD at 1-888-626-9008) and speak with a specialist regarding [EEO Complaint Processing](#), [Alternative Dispute Resolution](#), and [Harassment Prevention](#). You must initiate contact with an EEO counselor within 45 days of the date of the alleged act of discrimination by calling 1-888-566-3982 or visiting your local ORMDI Field Office. The harassment prevention procedures do not affect rights under the EEO complaint process. Employees must report harassment as soon as they believe management action is needed. If an employee has made the harasser aware of the unwanted conduct and the harassment persists, employees should report the unwanted behavior immediately.



World War II. "In May 1944, then Technical Sergeant Barfoot, at the age of 25, set out alone to flank German machine gun positions and stop enemy bullets that were killing his fellow soldiers. He advanced through a minefield and took out three enemy machine gun emplacements with hand grenades. As German tank crew members dismounted from their disabled tank, Sergeant Barfoot killed three of the German soldiers outright with his tommy gun. He then continued further into enemy terrain and destroyed a recently abandoned German fieldpiece with a demolition charge placed in the breach. Returning to his platoon, he assisted two of his seriously wounded men 1,700 yards to a position of safety. [Sergeant] Barfoot is credited with capturing and bringing back 17 German prisoners of war to his platoon position that day. [He] was subsequently commissioned a U.S. Army second lieutenant in the infantry" ([DEOMI](#)).

According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), the Nation's AI/AN population (alone or in combination with other race groups) in 2020 stood at 7.1 million and is projected to grow to 10.1 million by July 2060, constituting 2.5% of the total U.S. population.

Commemorate

National Native American Heritage Month

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) joins the Nation in observing National Native American Heritage Month in November. Established by the Defense Equality Opportunity Management Institute ([DEOMI](#)), the 2021 theme is: "Grounded in Tradition, Resilient in Spirit."

American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Veterans are exemplary of this year's theme. Army Lieutenant Van T. Barfoot was a Choctaw Indian and recipient of the United States military's highest decoration, the Medal of Honor, for his actions in

At the end of fiscal year 2021, AI/ANs represented 1.01% of the Relevant Civilian Labor Force and 1.53% of VA's permanent workforce (399,391 employees). This is an increase of 76 employees from the previous fiscal year. Of the 125,296 Veterans employed by VA, 1,957 are AI/AN (1.56%) ([Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion Workforce Analysis Team](#)). [Continued on the next page.](#)

Commemorate

[Continued from the previous page](#)

In support of AI/AN employees, VA signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with the Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) in 2019. SAIGE is a non-profit organization representing AI/AN Federal, Tribal, State, and local government employees. VA employees are encouraged to explore the resources SAIGE provides including the Annual National Training Program, open to all, focused on professional development, leadership and topics related to the complex Federal Indian Trust Responsibility. As part of this program, SAIGE offers special training sessions for Veterans and youth. For more information, visit the [SAIGE website](#).

For information on VA's AI/AN Special Emphasis Program (SEP), visit the [AI/AN SEP webpage](#).

Family Caregivers Month

November is National Family Caregivers Month. During National Family Caregivers Month, the VA recognizes the 5.5 million caregivers who make Veteran's lives better. Visit the [VA Caregiver Support Program website](#) for more information about services, peer networks, and educational materials or call 1-855-260-3274 to learn more about the support that is available to you and for assistance connecting with the [Caregiver Support Coordinator](#) at your local VA Medical Center.

Transgender Day of Remembrance and Transgender Awareness Month

November 20 marks Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR). This annual observance honors the memory of the transgender people whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence. Over the years, this observance expanded to "Transgender Awareness Week" and then later evolved into "Transgender Awareness Month" which is now commemorated each year in November as a time to recognize and uplift the voices and experiences of the transgender and gender non-conforming (GNC) community through education and action.

In observance of TDOR and Transgender Awareness Month, the National VA LGBTQ+ Employee Workgroup will be hosting two virtual events:

- Transgender Employee Transition Guidance on November 16, 2021, 1–2:30 p.m. (Eastern): Drew Hunter (he/him/his), VA LGBTQ+ Employee Workgroup Member, will co-present with Sterling Akins, J.D. (he/him/his), VA Departmental LGBTQ+ Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) and VA LGBTQ+ Employee Workgroup Chair, to provide an overview of VA Handbook 5975.4, Transgender Employee Transition Guidance.
- Gender Awareness and Pronoun Usage on November 17, noon–1 p.m. (Eastern): Tisa Olsen, CPPS (she/her/hers), Certified Peer Support Specialist, will co-present with Michelle C. Wilcox, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Licensed Advanced Substance-Use Disorder Counselor (she/her/hers), LGBT Veteran Care Coordinator, to provide an in-depth look at American gender concepts, including the origins and lasting impact of a binary gender system. Staff will be provided tools to understand how gender identity functions within the VA culture and policies.

For information on the National VA LGBTQ+ Employee Workgroup TDOR/Transgender Awareness Month events or to review the National VA Virtual Pride events recorded earlier this past June, contact Mr. Akins.

You can support transgender or GNC patients, Veterans, friends, family members, and co-workers through validation and education. Show validation by respecting a person's name and pronouns. In meetings and trainings, you can share your pronouns and invite others to do the same. You can also share your pronouns in your signature block and on your business cards. In waiting rooms, you can call out "Veteran Smith" instead of "Mr." or "Ms."

For information on VA's LGBTQ+ policies relating to Veterans, including VHA Directive 1341, Providing Health Care for Transgender and Intersex Veterans, visit [Patient Care Services](#). For information on policies and resources for VA employees, including VA Handbook 5975.4, visit the [LGBTQ+ Program webpage](#). For questions pertaining to transgender or GNC Veterans, contact your facility's [LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator](#). For questions pertaining to transgender or GNC employees, contact your facility's LGBTQ+ SEPM or EEO Manager.



**Grounded in Tradition
Resilient in Spirit**

NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH
NOVEMBER



2021 POSTER CREDIT: [DEOMI](#)

Message from the DAS

Harvey Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion



DAS Johnson, ORMDI

Anyone can experience harassment and anyone can create a hostile work environment. This includes a coworker, management official, or a non-employee. At VA, we have a zero-tolerance policy for workplace harassment.

VA employees are encouraged to review the [Bystander Intervention Training for Veterans](#), a free, online training module that does not require registration and takes about 30 minutes to complete. Any individual who has been subjected to or witnessed unwelcome conduct is encouraged to use the strategies introduced in this training to safely intervene or report unwelcome and offensive conduct.

As a reminder, ORMDI also hosts a monthly virtual learning event, “Overview of Harassment Prevention Program (HPP)” (TMS VA 4563938). Classes are held the first Wednesday of each month from 10–11 a.m. and 2–3 p.m. (Eastern). All employees and supervisors are welcome.

Thank you for joining ORMDI in our commitment to building an organization free of harassment in all forms.

Federal Communications Commission Telecommunications Relay Services

November 15 Deadline to Register with New Service Provider

Effective November 15, 2021, VA will transition from the General Services Administration (GSA) Federal Relay Services (FRS) contract to Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Telecommunication Relay Services (TRS). Relay services include Text Telephones (TTY), Speech-to-Speech, Captioned Telephone, Internet Protocol (IP) Relay, Video Relay Services including Video Relay Interpreting, and Closed Captioned Relay.

VA employees with a disability that affects hearing or speech and utilize one of the various GSA FRS listed above can begin transitioning their services to FCC TRS by contacting their Reasonable Accommodation/Personal Assistance Services (RA/PAS) Coordinator. A list of RA/PAS Coordinators by administration is available on the [RA webpage](#) on the ORMDI website.

Due to the potential high volume of existing users transferring to the new contract, submit your request promptly to ensure staff has adequate time to process your request prior to the November 15 deadline to avoid any loss of service.

Schedule A Hiring Authority for Individuals with Disabilities

Fill Vacancies and Leverage Diversity in VA

Human Resources Specialists should discuss the benefits of using Schedule A with hiring officials during the pre-recruitment consultation and review of hiring flexibilities that are available. The Schedule A Hiring Authority allows Federal agencies the opportunity to non-competitively appoint an individual with an intellectual, severe, or a psychiatric disability to an excepted service appointment under 5 C.F.R. § 213.3102(u). These appointments may be permanent, time-limited, or on a temporary basis. The Schedule A Hiring Authority will help VA hire skilled and diverse employees in an efficient and streamlined manner without posting a job opportunity announcement. Additionally, the Department can demonstrate its commitment to be a model employer for people with disabilities through its proactive use of Schedule A. For more information, visit VA’s [Individuals with Disabilities Employment Program webpage](#).

Policy Alert

VA Directive 0010

VA Directive 0010, [VA Customer Experience](#) establishes policy, requirements and responsibilities for VA CX to ensure all Veterans, Service members, their families, caregivers and survivors receive consistent world-class experiences across VA.

Training

The Audacity to Fail Podcast

The Audacity to Fail Podcast: ~~mis~~Stepping Into Success focuses on discovering leadership wisdom through experiences with failures and missteps. The podcasts dive into conversations and stories from leaders as they share that failure activates a growth mindset, is an important part of learning and motivation for improvement! For Season One's special close out episode, Dr. Shari Dade is joined by Dr. Richard Stone, an Independent Contractor and Healthcare Strategist. Dr. Stone is the former acting Under Secretary for Health at the Veterans Health Administration. In this conversation, Dr. Stone discusses the missteps leaders can make throughout their leaderships careers and when they are embarking on the journey of new beginnings. The series is also available on the [Talent Management System](#).

National Diversity Internship Program

Consider a 2022 Summer Intern

Managed by the Human Capital Services Center (HCSC), the National Diversity Internship Program (NDIP) provides internship opportunities and invaluable work experience in VA career fields to diverse undergraduate and graduate students who are currently enrolled, full-time or part-time, in a degree-seeking program at accredited post-secondary institutions, including Minority Serving Institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Asian American Colleges, Pacific Islander Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities.

This internship program requires each student to complete up to 40 hours per week on site at a VA location. Student skills, knowledge, experience, and abilities will generally be matched with a suitable intern position. NDIP interns will not be placed in positions such as clinical settings, direct patient care, processing clinical data, or research positions that fall under the purview of the Veterans Health Administration Office of Academic Affiliations.

Students interested in internships must apply directly to one of the approved vendors listed on the [NDIP website](#). Students selected for a NDIP internship are employees of the contracted vendor and receive a bi-weekly stipend. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, only local internships (interns recruited in the local area not requiring housing or travel) will be approved until further notice.

VA organizations requesting to host a student intern must:

- Receive approval from the appropriate organizational official (Director, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Branch Chief, etc.) to authorize sponsorship of an intern.
- Assign a primary and alternate mentor who will be on site to interact with the intern and provide guidance on project tasks and assignments. Additional requirements are detailed in the mentor agreement available from the NDIP Application Portal.
- Obtain approval for funding prior to applying.
- Submit a completed application and all required documents by the deadlines listed below.

To apply for a NDIP intern, prospective mentors may complete a NDIP application available from the NDIP Application Portal. Applications for the summer session (June through August 2022) will be accepted during February 2022. A separate application must be completed for each intern requested. All applications must include a signed mentor agreement, nondisclosure agreement, and signed funding document (VA Form 90-2237) for the estimated cost of the NDIP internship.

For more information, visit the [NDIP website](#). For access to the NDIP Application Portal, contact the [HCSC NDIP Manager](#).



Office of Human Resources & Administration/Operations, Security, and Preparedness
Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion (ORMDI)
Alternative Dispute Resolution | EEO Complaint Processing | Harassment Prevention Program
Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection
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